

ADVISORY TAX BOARD SENDS OUT INSTRUCTIONS

Uniformity of Assessment Stated to Be Main Objective of New Tax Laws.

UTIES OF LOCAL BOARDS

Work of Examiner of Records William H. Sands, of this District, Held Up as Model for Other Examiners to Follow.

Members of the local boards of review throughout the Commonwealth will receive this week a lengthy letter from the State Advisory Board on Taxation. It was drawn up by State Auditor C. Lee Moore and approved by the board in the last week.

The document deals with the duties of the boards of review by the General Assembly, and is designed to guide the members of the local boards. The communication is in part as follows:

The Constitution and the statute law of this State require real estate and personal property to be assessed at fair value. These requirements have not heretofore been complied with, and the General Assembly has decided it is necessary to change the system of assessment in order that this requirement might be better enforced throughout the Commonwealth, thereby making assessments as uniform as possible.

Under the old law there were great inequalities in the assessment of real estate and tangible personal property. A large proportion of taxable personal property escaped taxation. To correct these conditions changes were made in the tax laws. It is hoped and believed the present system will result in the taxation of all property, and effect as far as possible, uniformity of assessment, thereby ultimately to secure reduction in the rates of taxation (State and local). If, by the discovery of additional property, the assessments are doubled, the rates can and will be reduced one-half.

EXAMINERS HERETOFORE THEIR OWN ASSESSORS

Heretofore taxpayers have in a large measure been their own assessors. In many instances through inadequate assessments and large local levies, localities have been able to raise sufficient revenue for local purposes, but have not contributed to the support of the State Government their just share of the revenue. The State's rate being fixed and uniform, the whole State, her revenue was reduced by the reduced assessments.

The State Board urges the local boards of review in every county and city to make thorough and full investigations and fair and uniform assessments.

The Tenth Judicial Circuit, composed of the city of Richmond and county of Henrico, the examiner of records is sparing no expense and giving of his time and energy, making a proper share of revenue, the rate being fixed and uniform, the whole State, her revenue was reduced by the reduced assessments.

DO NOT HESITATE TO REMOVE DELINQUENTS

The State advisory board desires to perfectly frank with the taxing officer, and begs leave to state that it is the duty of assessors, commissioners of the revenue and examiners of records, all bonded officers, sworn to perform their duties, discharge the duties required of them by the State and the localities in which they are appointed, and to perform the duties put upon them by law.

The State advisory board is determined to see that the tax laws are impartially and fearlessly administered with respect to all taxpayers in every county and city, and that the work of assessing is done thoroughly in all sections of the State.

The local boards of review are requested to communicate at once to the State advisory board any delinquency on the part of assessors, commissioners of the revenue and examiners of records which may come to their attention.

The limitation of thirty days to do work will require you to use the time with the utmost care and zeal for the importance of the work is required to perform.

It is, therefore, suggested that the board arrange with the examiner of records periods of time for taking up with him the different classes of the work and not to sit continuously for a thirty days.

The object of your appointment and the intent of the law is to assess all

classes of property not only that which is visible to the taxing officer, but that which is invisible, and, therefore, difficult to discover and assess. Another thing very much desired is to make the assessments uniform with respect to the different classes of property throughout the State. You have been chosen to perform these duties and have been given the aid of the local board of records with power to summon taxpayers and other persons having knowledge of the facts in making investigations respecting intangible personal property, money and income, and reports of merchants' purchases. Your powers are full and complete. Fairness, earnestness and promptness in the discharge of your duties will result in the taxation of all persons according to their possessions and in uniformity in assessments with respect to persons and property throughout the Commonwealth.

A very important work the board must perform this year is the review of the landbook of the assessor of lands. The assessment made by this officer stands unchanged for five years unless changed by the local board of review or the Circuit Court of a county or the Corporation (or Hustings) Court of a city.

This work is of the most important character, especially in the case of localities, because, under the new law, the State will receive only 10 cents on each \$100 of assessed valuation for support of public free schools, whereas the revenue of the locality will be principally derived from the levies on real estate.

ASSESSMENT OF INTANGIBLE PROPERTY

The review of the interrogatories of taxpayers relating to intangible personal property and money should have very careful and thorough scrutiny. Much of this class of property has heretofore escaped taxation because it is not visible to the taxing officer, the evidence thereof being filed away in the offices or homes of the owners with other valuable papers or placed in safety vaults of banks and trust companies in and out of this State.

In some of the cities and counties loans are made upon real estate evidenced by negotiable notes secured by deeds of trust. These notes being negotiable are difficult to locate by taxing officers and in many instances there has heretofore been wilful and deliberate avoidance of taxation upon such loans operating to the disadvantage of taxpayers investing their money in other taxable property. We emphasize the fact that many of these transactions have been purposely made to avoid taxation and they have resulted in depriving the Commonwealth, as well as the counties and cities, of large sums of revenue. It is, therefore, very important that the local boards of review should investigate most carefully such transactions summoning brokers, real estate agents and other individuals named as trustees in the deeds, or whom the records show were connected with the transactions, to appear before them and inform the board if possible who owns these notes now and to whom they should be taxed.

PROVISIONS AS TO SHARES OF STOCK AND INCOME

Residents of this State who own stock issued by corporations all of whose capital is taxed by this State, or which pay a franchise tax to this State, are exempt from taxation on such stock. Other stock owned by them is taxable on the intangible personal property interrogatory, except bank stock, other provision for the assessment of which is made by sections 17-22 (pages 22-25 of the Tax Laws).

A resident of this State who owns stock issued by a national bank located outside of this State is not taxable by Virginia on such stock, because such stock is taxable to him or her under the national banking act by the State in which the bank is located. A taxpayer cannot deduct from taxable stock any indebtedness, such as is allowed in the taxation of bonds, notes and evidences of debt, under item first (section 5).

The provisions of the new law taxing income are very liberal, both with respect to deduction and exemption, and the taxpayers should be very careful to list all their income, and the local board of review should be very thorough in investigating the income interrogatories.

Many persons on salaries of \$1,200 and over do not pay income tax to the State of Virginia, especially in the

cities. The persons and officers of corporations employing those persons can be summoned to testify as to their salaries, wages, etc.

PENALTY PROVIDED FOR EVASION OF LAW

If any person, firm or corporation shall, with a view to evade the payment of taxes, fail or refuse to make out and deliver under oath such list and statement as herein provided for of any such bonds, notes and other evidences of debt, then the omitted evidences of debt shall not be recoverable by action at law or suit in equity in any of the courts of the Commonwealth or by any legal process, or by sale under deed of trust, or otherwise, until they shall have been reported for assessment, and the taxes paid thereon for the year that they should have been paid, with an addition of 50 per centum of the amount of said unpaid taxes; and the failure to make out such list and statement to the said commissioner shall be taken as prima facie evidence of the intention to so evade payment of taxes.

In the event any taxpayer shall fail, without just cause shown, to return for taxation any intangible personal property under the provisions of this schedule within the time prescribed by law, and it is ascertained thereafter that any such property has not been returned for taxation, it shall be assessed when discovered, and taxed at the full rate of taxation provided for real estate in this State, which shall include the State rate and the local rates and levies of the county, district, town or city wherein the owner or taxpayer has his legal residence.

INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO LOCAL BOARDS OF REVIEW

The State Advisory Board is sending out in the same mail a communication of a kindred nature, with the instructions to the boards of review, which is also an interesting document. It reads in part:

"In a very large measure the success of the new system of taxation depends upon the efficiency with which you perform your new duties. The board sends this communication to you because so much depends upon your faithfulness and efficiency. The General Assembly selected you to make the review, investigation and examination now required because of your professional ability and experience, and because they believe that the results of your work would justify their selection and confirm the wisdom of their action."

"Examination of the books of merchants for information respecting

purchases should be made where the examiner deems it necessary, and while he is without authority to compel merchants to exhibit their books, it is believed the merchants will cordially and readily acquiesce in the request of the examiner, because the examination obtained will not be disclosed. Acquiescence by that merchant in the request of the examiner will obviate the necessity of summoning him and

others before the local board of review for examination under oath.

"In the same manner the examiner can procure from taxpayers direct information relative to their returns of intangible, personal property, income and money. The examiner can and should call upon others, whom he believes can furnish information, although he is without power to summon witnesses, yet persons refusing to furnish the information he desires

can, and will, upon request of the examiner, be summoned before the local boards of review for examination under oath, where they will be required to make full disclosures.

"The principal and leading object of the new tax law is to make assessments uniform and thorough throughout the Commonwealth, and to subject to taxation all property in all sections of the State. To accomplish that end, the disclosures in one section

should be as thorough and complete as the work is actively and carefully done in other sections. The State board believes that taxpayers will be willing and ready to respond fully to the requirements of the law if they feel assured that the law will be enforced alike throughout the entire Commonwealth, and the State board wishes taxing officers to bear this in mind and so to perform their duties as to bring about this result."

Miller & Rhoads---"The Shopping Center---Miller & Rhoads

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Smart Summer Dresses and Suits

And Other Smart Apparel for Woman or Miss

NEW! This word alone tells the story of to-morrow's attractions in our Women's Outerwear Section. The surest way of knowing the last word in summer apparel style is to visit Miller & Rhoads during the coming week! We aim always to keep in the vanguard in the exclusiveness of our offerings. And withal, our prices are moderate. Attention is directed to the following popular items:

Women's and Misses' Cloth Suits, \$15

About 30 high-grade Spring Weight Suits, marked for a one-day clearance! Navy blue, Belgian blues, checks, grays and fancies; nobby jackets, in tailored and trimmed effects; Skirts are all full plaits or plain flare. Every suit originally sold for much more. They are now priced \$15.00.

Palm Beach Suits, \$8.95

Pretty models in tan, and black, and blue pin stripes. Just the cool suit for summer wear. Strikingly new summer styles; every suit is man-tailored and neatly finished.

Be sure to see these Suits; they are specially priced at \$8.95. Women's and misses' sizes.

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A Complete Line of Beach and Bathing Suits

Made of the best of materials and neatly finished. Some include certain new ideas that have not been shown before.

Women's and Misses' Bathing and Beach Suits, \$1.98 up.

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Special Bathing Suits for Women and Misses, \$1.98

An excellent near-mo-hair suit, with bloomers; made in several styles—all sizes.

Cool Summer Frocks

Frocks for women and misses that are fascinating to look at and delightful to wear. Of cool materials, made in all the very latest ideas—plain colors, stripes, checks and fancy fabrics. And all are marked especially for this sale at the following prices—

\$3.95, \$5, \$5.95, \$8.50

At the above prices are a large assortment of styles, including apron tunics, velvet trimmed models, coat effects, ruffled skirt models, etc.

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Golfine Coats, in the popular colors; also Polo Cloth Coats, in white. Nobby new models that are winning popular favor at

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Golfine Skirts at \$5.00

These in white and the original shade of rose; a very smart model. We guarantee this skirt to launder perfectly.

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A large assortment of new styles in Gabardine, Pique, Linen, Rep, and other favorite materials; all sizes; excellent values for \$2.98.

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150 of These Hats Are to Be Sold Monday at \$1.00

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THE BEST VALUE THAT CAN BE HAD AT \$1.50, OUR PRICE

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Latest effects in Felt, Golfine, Corduroy, Duck and Genuine Panama, black velvet with light colored facings is one of the latest styles. All women who want to wear the very latest creations in millinery should see these hats.

Priced From \$1.50 Up to \$7.50

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—You cannot afford to delay longer.

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—Get on an equal footing with those who have graduated from "Massey" and are now earning from \$75 to \$100 monthly.

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